

the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Why are Red Cups red?

A. We tried to contact Toby Keith for the answer but he was unavailable due to “having a party with his friend, the Red Solo Cup.”

The Solo Company was formed in 1936 and has grown into a \$1.6 billion company. Since being introduced in the 1970s, red cups make up 60% of Solo Cup sales. Thanks, college students.

Red was the first color of the cup that was produced and most likely set the standard for brand recognition. However, these polystyrene cups do come in other colors such as blue and clear, as well as a biodegradable version called Bare for the environmentally conscious drinker.

Jennifer Forbes, author of the blog, qualitylogoproducts.com speculates that the popularity of the color red may have something to do with its “genderless color that signifies intensity and energy” that may explain its appeal to partiers of both sexes.

It's ironic that the original intention of the red cup may have been to hide the alcohol contents of the cup by underage drinkers. Yet, the universal usage of red drinking cups makes it immediately obvious that an alcoholic beverage is being consumed and not concealed.

However, the “conceal” does pose risks. It's hard to know exactly how much alcohol is contained in any cup. While a 16 oz. red cup of beer generally contains 1.3 standard drinks and is easier to manage, red cups filled with hard liquor like vodka are a lot harder to gauge. Since just one ounce of hard liquor equals one standard drink, your 16 oz. red cup could easily contain a considerable amount of alcohol: up to 16 standard drinks!

Few people actually know how many standard drinks are contained in their cup of “jungle juice.” It could be 1, 2, 5, or – who knows?! Not knowing your cup's alcohol content, especially when combined with drinking games, may result in regretful experiences. So mix your own drinks if you are going to partake. Better yet, avoid red cups filled with hard liquor and drinking games altogether. And, don't get alcohol facts from Toby Keith music videos.



wildfact

Cardinal Red became an official UA color in 1900.



Got a question
about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

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